DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 378 593 CS 214 716

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TITLE Publishing a School Newspaper Using Computer Technology.
INSTITUTION Maine Center for Educational Services.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 7p.; A product of Project SEED.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; Intermediate Grades; Journalism Education; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; Program Descriptions; School Community Relationship; *School Newspapers; *Student Publications; *Writing for Publication
IDENTIFIERS Community Newspapers; *Technology Integration

ABSTRACT

By publishing a quarterly school and community newspaper, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders get involved in the writing of many types of articles, proofreading, communication skills, interviewing skills, investigative reporting, photography, artistic and graphic design, and computer technology. As the students work together on each issue of the school paper, they develop enthusiasm, commitment, responsibility, respect for each other, community awareness and appreciation, and the importance of working together for a common goal. Students meet with the editor about 4 weeks prior to publication to discuss newsworthy events and issues. Students work on their chosen areas for the paper in their free time. Frequent meetings keep the process moving. Articles are proofread and the layout committee designs the pages. Materials needed include a computer, a laser printer, a desktop publishing program, and access to a commercial printing service or a school copy machine. The time factor takes a lot of cooperation from the regular classroom teachers of the students working on the newspapers. Publishing a newspaper for the school and the community is a way for townspeople and the student population to gain a new appreciation of each other. (RS)

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Publishing a School Newspaper Using Computer Technology

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General Description:

This project involves sixth, seventh and eighth graders in the publishing of a quarterly school newspaper which is distributed throughout the community and area businesses.

The newspaper involves four teachers working together in different aspects of publishing. Several of those areas include the editorial department, photography, layout department and newspaper coordinator. A parent volunteer is involved in the typing of articles, and overseeing several student typists.

We also involve several older citizens in the distribution of the paper to our community and local businesses.

Goals:

The primary goal of this project is for the sixth, seventh and eighth graders to publish a school and community newspaper. In doing so they are involved in the writing of many types of articles, proofreading, communication skills, interviewing skills, investigative reporting, photography, artistic and graphic design, computer technology, along with many other skills.

As the students work together on each issue of the school paper, they develop enthusiasm, commitment, responsibility, respect for each other, community awareness and appreciation, and most importantly, they learn the importance of working together for a common goal.

In order for the students to accomplish the primary goal of publishing a school newspaper, the editor meets with them

approximately four weeks prior to the actual printing of the paper and we discuss newsworthy events and issues. The students then decide on what areas they would like to be involved with, some of which may be headline captions, health and safety issues, sporting events, book, movie and video reviews, interviewing, local school events, editorials, club news, spotlight page, comics, and special events. They also may decide they would like to be a student typist or work in the layout or photography design of the paper.

The students are then expected to work on their chosen areas for the paper in their free time. As these articles are completed, they are put in a special folder for the proofreading team. Once the articles are proofread they are put in folders labeled for their particular section, such as sports, the typists then complete this section of the publishing by typing the articles and placing them in the appropriate file. Once all the article for section have been typed, the layout committee goes to work and designs the page. These large layout sheets are then placed between sheets of paper ready for printing!

Resources:

Materials: Computer, laser printer, publishing program such as *Writing Center, Claris Works, Microsoft Works, Page Maker, etc.*

Facilities: Printer, either commercial such as *The Ellsworth American* or you can use a school copy machine.

Expenses: We had two expenses this year, they were purchasing a digital camera and professional printing of the paper by The Ellsworth American. The camera was $600.00 and the printing averaged out to about $175.00 / per 1000 copies each quarter.

Time: The time factor takes a lot of cooperation from the regular classroom teachers of the newspaper staff students, which in our case involved about 30 students. Three weeks prior to the printing, students met with the teacher in charge of his or her area to receive help with any concerns. This took place every Thursday afternoon. Following this schedule worked out very well. A substitute was also scheduled for this time to free up the teachers involved.

Conclusion:

As the overall value, we feel this newspaper is a method of exchanging information between our school and community of approximately 600 people. We believe the townspeople and our student population will gain a new appreciation of each other, which ultimately will serve as an avenue of communication. These students are experiencing computer technology, publishing and printing through this project. They show tremendous enthusiasm and commitment to the project which will benefit them and the community for years to come.

Meetings and Responsibilities:

First Meeting: The first meeting consists of a large group of all interested students. A brainstorming event of what articles of interest, special events, community activities, and areas of news worthy events that should be included in the newspaper is discussed in this first meeting. The editor lists all the student ideas in a booklet to be passed out for the next meeting.

Second Meeting: Again, this is a meeting with all interested students. The students will review all ideas generated during the brainstorming session of the first meeting and now choose the area they want to work on. At this meeting, area responsibilities are discussed. For example, if three students choose to work on the community area, now we brainstorm all community projects, how to conduct an interview, photos that would enhance the interviews or articles, areas that would interest most of the population reading this article. Some of the possible group choices are: typing, proofreading, interviewing, sports, headline captions, editorials, layout design, photography, reviews, etc. A limit is set, of up to three students per choice, and a teacher/volunteer is assigned to work with three groups or more. The teacher/volunteer is the group facilitator discussing with the students each group responsibility.

Future Meetings: Each teacher meets with their individual groups to check in on the progress. The students are expected to work on their articles in their free time, once completed, put the completed article in

the designated folder. The typists check the folders, type the news, and then forwards it to the proofreaders folder. The proofreader checks the article over, corrections are made, and then it goes to the layout folder. The layout committee then places/designs the page. They choose headline captions from those designed by the headline group, photos from the photo group, and the newspaper is well on its way to publication!